

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



YOUTH PERSPECTIVES IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE

New Tasks for Research and Policy

International conference

20-21 October 2025

Scotland House

Rond Point Schuman 6

Brussels, Belgium

The international conference Youth Perspectives in Contemporary Europe is organised within the framework of the partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth 2024-2025. The conference is an opportunity to take stock of the research conducted by the partnership, as well as to identify topics for a future research agenda. It will furthermore serve as a unique networking occasion for the youth sector shortly after the 10th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth to be held in La Valletta (Malta) on 8 and 9 October and in the context of the listening process to gather inputs for the preparation of the European Commission proposal for the future EU Youth Strategy.

Rationale for the conference

Young people are shaping 21st-century European societies amid expanding digital networks, shifting demographics and a rapidly changing environment. The democratic, cyber, and physical spaces they navigate are vastly different from those of previous generations. At the same time, young people in Europe are mobilising around issues such as environmental protection, democratic values, diversity, equality and inclusion as well as countering extremist ideologies, white-supremacy and the *anti-gender movement*.

At the same time, shrinking civic space has made self-organisation more difficult, with growing legislative, financial and administrative barriers for youth organisations. Factors such as social media algorithms, economic insecurity, limited representation and declining trust in institutions can discourage youth engagement. Vulnerable groups – including young people with disabilities, refugees, migrants, Roma, LGBTI people, young people in rural areas and those from low-income backgrounds – face additional challenges, which European states are addressing to varying degrees. Democratic participation relies on equal access to rights and inclusion, yet racism,

religious intolerance and anti-LGBTI attitudes continue to undermine this principle. These forms of discrimination fuel hate speech, exclusion and barriers to meaningful engagement in public life, disproportionately affecting marginalised young people. Young people are actors, bystanders and victims of such developments.

Through its 2024–2025 work plan, the Youth Partnership has been exploring these and other topics of importance to young people, including youth perspectives and youth mainstreaming; youth activism in the context of the climate crisis and democracy; mental health and well-being, particularly in relation to the cost of living and digitalisation; and the rights of young people in rural areas.

Expected outcomes

- Bring together a diverse range of stakeholders in the youth field — including young people, youth organisations, policy makers, European institutions, researchers, and other relevant actors — to discuss young people’s realities in contemporary Europe.
- Provide a space for dialogue between researchers, policy makers, and representatives of youth organisations on topics of major importance.
- Disseminate knowledge and research gathered and analysed by the Youth Partnership over the past two years, share key findings, and highlight new and emerging issues in the youth field.
- Identify research and support needs to better address the current realities of young people, informing future youth policies and practices.